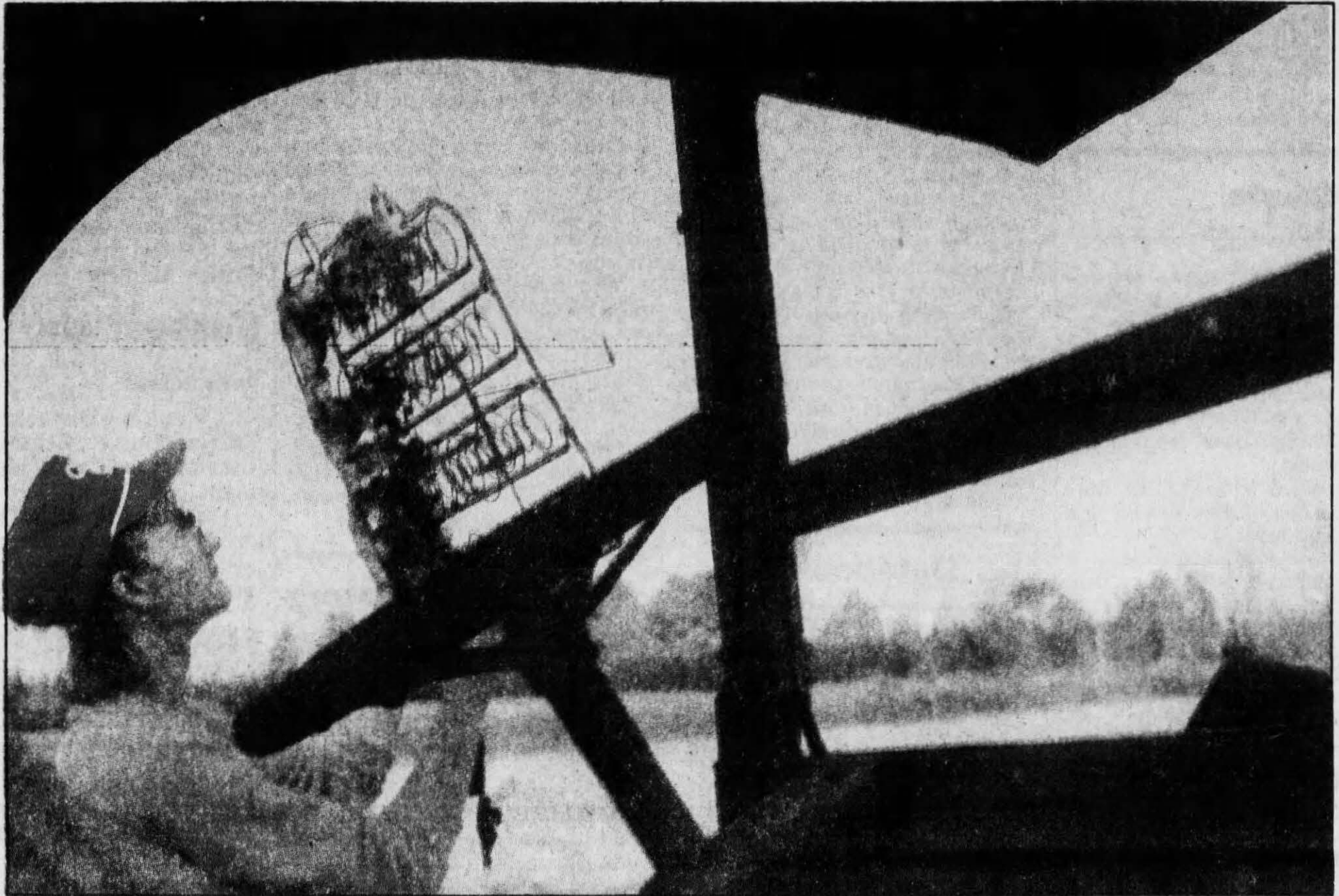


This week's community profile: Stiles Junction



Spring time: Eric Gegare, 18, Oconto, holds up springs from the seat of an antique vehicle at Larry

McGray's Antique Automotives. Gegare works at the business in Stiles Junction.

It's still the little town that could

By Karil Van Boxel

Press-Gazette

STILES JUNCTION — When the depot door is open these days, it attracts attention.

But in Stiles Junction's heyday, trains and a bustling depot were a part of life.

About 20 trains daily carried passengers and freight through this community about 30 miles

Press-Gazette photos by Ken Behrend

north of Green Bay. On weekend after-

noons, bumper-to-bumper traffic on U.S. 141 brought people to board the train.

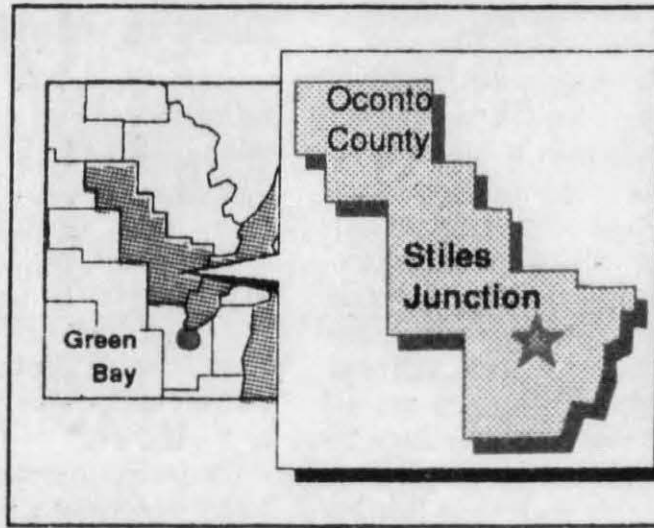
"It was quite a busy place at the depot," said Amos Truckey, 77, who owned a nearby restaurant. It was a junction for the Chicago and North Western and the Milwaukee Road railroads, he said.

Truckey, of Route 2, Oconto, sold plate lunches and hamburgers in the family business. His father operated a bar, restaurant and hotel here. Truckey remembers the paper mill burning down in 1924. After that, the population dwindled.

Today, the depot holds railroad tracks instead of waiting passengers and is the base of operations for an Escanaba and Lake Superior Railroad maintenance crew. The depot is centrally located on the E&LS' 342 miles of track between Green Bay and Ontonagon, Mich., said Tom Klimek, manager of the railroad's Green Bay operation.

Rochelle and David Jahnke, 24, 5739 U.S. 141, live in an apartment next to the tracks.

"The train is noisy, but you can live with it," Rochelle said. "It's not too exciting, but I like it (here) because it's in the



Stiles Junction file

- **Population:** 40
- **Residency:** Some people who live beyond the Stiles Junction signs on U.S. 141 and Wisconsin 22 consider themselves residents of Stiles; others claim allegiance to Stiles Junction.
- **Farm families:** In the 1940s, much of the area was farm land, says former Town Assessor Arthur Schroeder, 88. Today, only 13 area dairy farms are active.

country and people are close to visit with." She also is close to work.

The Insurance Specialists, where Rochelle has been customer service representative and secretary for seven years, is in the same building as the Jahnkes' apartment.

Her father, Jim McClure and his partner Erv Tomalak, bought the building in 1984 and remodeled it for offices, a beauty shop and a two-bedroom apartment.

U.S. 141 and Wisconsin 22 also cross in Stiles Junction.

John "Jack" Duame's, home and business are at the highway junction. His father's home was across the road, but when Wisconsin 22 was built in 1932, the home was moved.

"We thought nothing of walking to Stiles twice on a Sunday to baseball games," Duame recalled. "We didn't have the traffic like today."

Duame, 58, said a stop light installed at the intersection helped give his dump trucks better access to the highways.

Duame's wife, Yvonne, and sons, Todd, 33, and Tim, 30, work in the sand and

gravel business, which also includes excavating, septic installation, garbage pickup and snow removal.

Todd's interest in the business started with Tonka trucks as a youngster. After graduation from Lena High School, he joined the business full-time.

"The people are friendly around here," he said. "I never thought about moving."

Neither did Sylvia Murphy, until 1981, when she and her late husband, Wencil, sold their store and locker plant and built a mobile home park at Oconto Falls. She worked long hours in their grocery business for 20 years. The store closed in 1969, but Murphy, 75, 5792 Oconto County I, sold it to H&M Sales, a former used car dealer, three years ago.

Larry McGray's Antique Automotives on Wisconsin 22 probably will open by Jan. 1, said employee Eric Gegare, 19, 6495 Cream City Road, Oconto.

The inside of the former W.A. Rusch building is being remodeled.

■ **Next week:** Maribel in Manitowoc County



Family business: Aboard a truck at a job site, John Duame talks with his sons, Timm, left, and Todd.



Rail walk: Rochelle Jahnke crosses railroad tracks behind her apartment.